

Condoning Their Own Oppression? Authoritarianism, Social Dominance, and System Justification Among People of Color Before and After 2024's Election

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Non-trivial shares of people of color (PoC) have long identified as Republicans. Yet following Donald Trump's 2024 re-election, the GOP's ideological agenda began to plainly hurt PoC. Is this false consciousness, where Republican PoC condone their own oppression? Or did they report intolerant attitudes to cheer on their party during a contentious campaign? Our brief note tests two claims. First, consistent with polarization literature, we contend that partisanship primed three postures toward intolerance among Republican PoC during the 2024 campaign: authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification. Second, aligning with work on expressive survey responses, we argue these postures faded significantly once Trump's agenda produced visibly harmful consequences for PoC (e.g., deportation raids; weakened civil rights). Leveraging a 3-wave panel of Black, Latino, and Asian adults ($N=3,626$), our pre-registered analyses indicate Republican partisanship in June 2024 heightened authoritarianism, social dominance, and system justification among Black, Latino, and Asian adults in December 2024. These patterns were fleeting, with partisanship's impact on these postures withering by July 2025. We find scattered evidence that these postures intensified PoC's Republican partisanship during this period, implying our results reflect campaign effects rather than a firm commitment among Republican PoC to bolster their own oppression.

On November 5, 2024, Republican Donald J. Trump clinched a second term as U.S. president by assembling a coalition that included many people of color (PoC), narrowly edging out Democrat Kamala Harris in the popular vote. Non-trivial shares of Black, Latino, and Asian adults have long identified as Republicans, as indicated by high-quality surveys of these populations since the 1980s (McClain and Johnson Carew 2017). Yet the central tendency within these groups trends toward Democrats, a fact prompting many to wonder why some Black, Latino, and Asian adults would vote for a party and candidate that are hostile to PoC's well-being (Gooding and McCarty 2025).

One perspective suggests that *false consciousness* drove many PoC to back the GOP in 2024 (Marx and Engels 1989), with the unequal standing of their own racial or ethnic groups receding in importance (Alamillo 2019; Jost 2019; Pérez et al. 2024b; Pérez et al. 2025). The interpretation here is that some PoC adopted the intolerant beliefs of their Republican party, thus condoning an unjust racial hierarchy at their own expense. This view makes sense if we consider that the 2024 campaign revolved around "culture war" issues like immigration, race relations, sexual orientation, and abortion (Fraga et al. 2025; O'Brian 2024; Velez 2024). Consequently, insofar as false consciousness was at play, it should have produced robust relations between Republican partisanship and reports of key postures that predispose individuals, including PoC, toward intolerance (Jost 2006; Federico and Malka 2023; Kteily and Brandt 2025). These include *authoritarianism* (a durable preference for social conformity and submission to authority), *social dominance orientation* (a lasting preference for intergroup hierarchies), and *system justification* (a stable preference for the status quo).

While often used to explain White support for oppressive politics, these postures also exist among many people of color, which explains how mass support for social inequalities arises (authoritarianism) (Stenner 2005); how these inequities are collectively enforced (social dominance) (Sidanius and Pratto 1999); and why these systems of oppression are so persistent (system justification) (Jost 2019). One hypothesis, then, is that Republican partisanship during the 2024 presidential campaign heightened these postures among some PoC (H1), with this stronger association establishing a firm opinion foundation for political efforts that visibly harm disadvantaged groups in U.S. society, including PoC's own racial or ethnic groups.

An alternative perspective, however, suggests that expressive responding better characterizes observed patterns in reports of these three postures among people of color (Malka and Adelman 2023; Graham and Huber 2022; Connors 2020; Bullock et al. 2015). By this account, individuals are motivated to voice attitudes that are congenial to their own political party. Accordingly, partisanship drives partisans to engage in a “brief, biased sampling of considerations from long-term memory (Malka and Adelman 2023: 1198)” that places their party in a positive light, suggesting these kinds of survey responses are fleeting and amenable to subsequent change in light of additional information or situational pressures.

The nature of campaigns makes it plausible they induce short-term pressures to respond in a party-consistent manner. Campaigns galvanize and coordinate the activity of partisan ingroups and outgroups (Turner et al. 1987; Haslam et al. 2020), thereby forming and cementing a winning voter coalition (Downs 1957; Aldrich 1995). This

implies strong signaling dynamics where individuals enhance their party's coordination efforts by sharing perspectives espoused by their co-partisans and leaders (Prior et al. 2015). This is a critical but low-stakes process. It is critical because expression of partisan attitudes delineates the boundaries of "who" is a real Republican or Democrat (Turner et al. 1987). It is low stakes because expressive attitudes do not guarantee genuine commitment to the behavioral implications of one's stated preferences (Kuran 1995). Thus, a second hypothesis (H2) is that PoC's reports of authoritarianism, social dominance, and system justification during the 2024 campaign were situationally induced, rather than evidence of a deep commitment to ideological efforts that visibly harm disadvantaged groups. Table 1 lists these two predictions.

Our brief report tests both claims by drawing on all three (3) waves of the 2024-2025 Survey Panel of People of Color (SPPoC): a unique dataset that interviewed a large sample of Black, Latino, and Asian adults ($N = 3,267$) both *before* and *after* the 2024 presidential election. Using validated measures of partisanship, authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification, we estimate a series of cross-lagged panel models (CLPMs) that yield two new insights. First, as predicted (H1), we find that greater Republican partisanship among people of color in June 2024 (Wave 1) is significantly associated with higher reported levels of authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification in December 2024 (Wave 2). These patterns are robust to key covariates and time-invariant confounding. Second, consistent with (H2), we learn that partisanship's relevance to individuals' downstream positions on these postures withered significantly after seven (7) months into the new

Trump administration (Wave 3, July 2025), once its ideological agenda directly and visibly started to harm various people of color through deportation raids, civil rights violations, reduced benefits for low-income families, and other political actions (McDonnel and Sanchez Vidal 2025; Mulvihill and Superville 2025). We find weak evidence that each posture constrains partisanship. Together, these results suggest that PoC's expression of authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification more likely reflected campaign effects rather than a firm commitment among Republican PoC to bolster their own oppression. We discuss our results' implications for research on the nature of PoC's partisanship in a polarized polity.

Table 1. Hypotheses About Partisanship and PoC's Postures Toward Intolerance

H1	H2
Stronger Republican partisanship increases reports of authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification <i>before</i> election day	Stronger Republican partisanship decrease reports of authoritarianism, social dominance, and system justification <i>after</i> election day

Research Design

We evaluate our pre-registered hypotheses by leveraging the 2024-2025 Survey Panel of People of Color (SPPoC), which interviewed Black, Latino, and Asian adults, for a total sample of N = 3,267. Our pre-registration is reported in section 1 of our online appendix (OA.1). SPPoC interviews occurred in June 2024 (Wave 1), December 2024 (Wave 2), and July 2025 (Wave 3). We undertook this panel study in collaboration with the National Opinion Research Center, which manages AmeriSpeak – a probability-

based panel with respondents selected via stratified random sampling to enhance representativeness and generalizability.¹

Each 10-minute wave measured authoritarianism with two forced-choice items about child-rearing values, which invited respondents to select between pairs of desirable traits in children. Unlike earlier authoritarianism measures (Pérez and Hetherington 2014), these items are cross-racially valid, which enables comparisons across (non-) White adults (Engelhardt et al. 2023). Respondents selected which trait they thought was more important for a child to be. The items read: "Would you say it is more important for a child to be curious or good mannered" (0 = Curious, 1 = Good mannered) and "Would you say it is more important for a child to be loyal or open-minded" (1 = Loyal, 0 = Open-minded). Responses were positively and significantly correlated within waves (W1: $\rho = .385$, SE = .027, $p < .001$; W2: $\rho = .553$, SE = .024, $p < .001$; W3: $\rho = .551$, SE = .025, $p < .001$). We created scales averaging replies to both items within each wave on 0-1 range (W1: $M_{AUTH} = .387$, SD = .354; W2: $M_{AUTH} = .284$, SD = .355; W3: $M_{AUTH} = .282$, SD = .351).

We also measured SDO with two items. One item asked participants to report their (dis)agreement with the statement "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). A second reverse-worded item asked respondents to report their (dis)agreement with "Groups at the bottom are just as

¹ The stratified random sample was based on age, race/Hispanic ethnicity, education, and sex, and their interactions. Across the 3 waves, the panel had a weighted cumulative response rate of 15.8%. The survey was offered in English or Spanish, with responses completed mainly through a self-administered web-based portal, with some others administered over the phone via live interviewers.

deserving as groups at the top." This item pair is significantly correlated within waves (W1: $\rho=.307$, SE=.021, $p<.001$; W2: $\rho=.306$, SE=.025, $p<.001$; W3: $\rho=.339$, SE=.024 $p<.001$). We created another set of averaged scales per wave in their original 7-point metric (W1: $M_{SDO}=2.567$, SD=1.310; W2: $M_{SDO}=2.623$, SD=1.308; W3: $M_{SDO}=2.589$, SD=1.320).

We tapped system justification by asking participants to report their (dis)agreement (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) with another item pair: "Everyone has a fair shot of wealth and happiness" and "Most individuals who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard." These were also highly correlated per wave (W1: $\rho=.688$, SE=.011, $p<.001$; W2: $\rho=.710$, SE=.013, $p<.001$; W3: $\rho=.716$, SE=.012, $p<.001$). We again created averaged scales per wave in their original metric (W1: $M_{SJ}=4.497$, SD=1.664; W2: $M_{SJ}=4.536$, SD=1.642; W3: $M_{SJ}=4.435$, SD=1.678).

To measure our main predictor – partisan identity – we used a standard item from American National Election Studies (ANES), which arrays individuals on a scale running from 1-strong Democrat to 7-strong Republican, inclusive of partisan "leaners." We also measured a suite of Wave 1 covariates, including respondents' race/ethnicity (Black = 1, Asian = 1, Latinos = 0), age (in years), college education (1=bachelor's degree or more, 0 = high school or less), gender (1=male, 0=all others), and nativity (1=born in the U.S., 0=born outside U.S.). About 36%, 29%, and 36% of our sample is Black, Asian, and Latino, respectively, with an average age of 49 years. An estimated 49% of respondents are college-educated, while 40% are male and 70% are

native-born (unweighted). Finally, 7% of Black adults, 28% of Latino adults, and 22% of Asian adults reported leaning toward or identifying with Republicans.²

We model Republican partisanship's influence on people of color's reports of authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification through a series of cross-lagged panel models (CLPMs) (Little 2024). In OA.2 we establish that our raw data contains meaningful variation to analyze within a longitudinal framework, minimizing concerns that our results are artifacts of our statistical approach. Our models test whether previous levels of Republican partisanship predict future levels of each posture toward intolerance. Following prior work, our primary models pool across all three sampled populations since the mega-category, *people of color*, operates as a coherent and meaningful ingroup across its constituent Black, Latino, and Asian members (Engelhardt et al. 2025; for a meta-analysis, see Pérez et al. 2024a). By design, our models eliminate the threat of confounding from factors that do not change in our time frame (Little 2024). Thus, our main models do not include demographic covariates. We test the robustness of this approach to inclusion of these covariates (OA.3). All models are estimated in a structural equation modeling (SEM) framework with the observed variance/covariance matrix as input and manifest variables as predictors and outcomes. We report standardized coefficients to facilitate comparisons. All reported *p*-values are two-tailed, unless indicated otherwise.

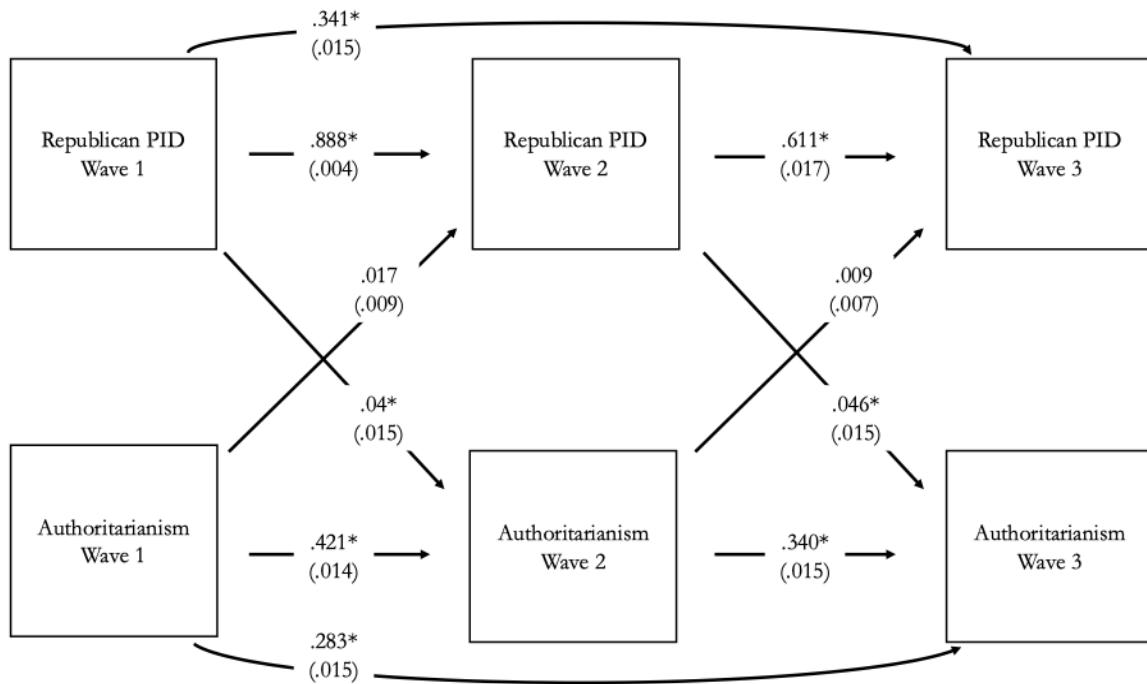
² Asian respondents: 48% women, 81% college-educated, 53% U.S-born, and average age 47. Black respondents: 68% women, 36% college-educated, 92% foreign-born, average age 53. Latino respondents: 48% women, 19% college-educated, 53% U.S.-born, and average age 47.

Results

(H1) predicts that during the pre-election period, stronger Republican partisanship (PID) significantly predicts how much authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification PoC express. We assess this by estimating PID's influence on each posture toward intolerance, with PID at Wave 1 impacting expressions of each posture at Wave 2, and PID at Wave 2 impacting each posture at Wave 3. Our models relax the stationarity assumption (Little 2024), allowing us to empirically observe whether any trends in the first period (W1 – W2) similarly arise in the post-election period (W2 – W3).

We visually display our model results for each posture. Figure 1 centers on authoritarianism levels before and after election day. This model fits the data very well (CFI/TLI: 1.00/1.00; RMSEA [90%CI]: .00 [.00, .02]; SRMR=.001). We find that in the period between Wave 1 (June '24) and Wave 2 (December '24), a standard deviation shift in Republican partisanship is associated with a small increase in reported authoritarianism (.040, SE=.015, $p < .001$), independently of previous authoritarianism levels, which supports (H1). In turn, we see that in the post-election period, this relationship is statistically comparable, with Republican PID again increasing reports of authoritarianism (.046, SE=.015, $p < .001$).

Figure 1. Temporal Relations between Republican PID and Authoritarianism



These two coefficients are substantively small. Although our pre-registration only recorded the *direction* of our anticipated relationships, we reason that in the context of racially intolerant attitudes among people of color – a mega-group generally characterized as highly racially progressive (Pérez 2021) – a small boost in intolerant attitudes within this segment of America’s adult population is likely to be felt, especially in presidential elections with razor-thin margins of victory. Consistent with this, the 99% interval for partisanship’s effect on authoritarianism in the pre-election period [.001, .080] and post-election [.008, .084] cannot rule out effects closer to $d \sim .10$ (Rainey 2014), which are common in the published literature on political attitudes among people of color (see Pérez et al. 2024a for meta-analytic evidence).

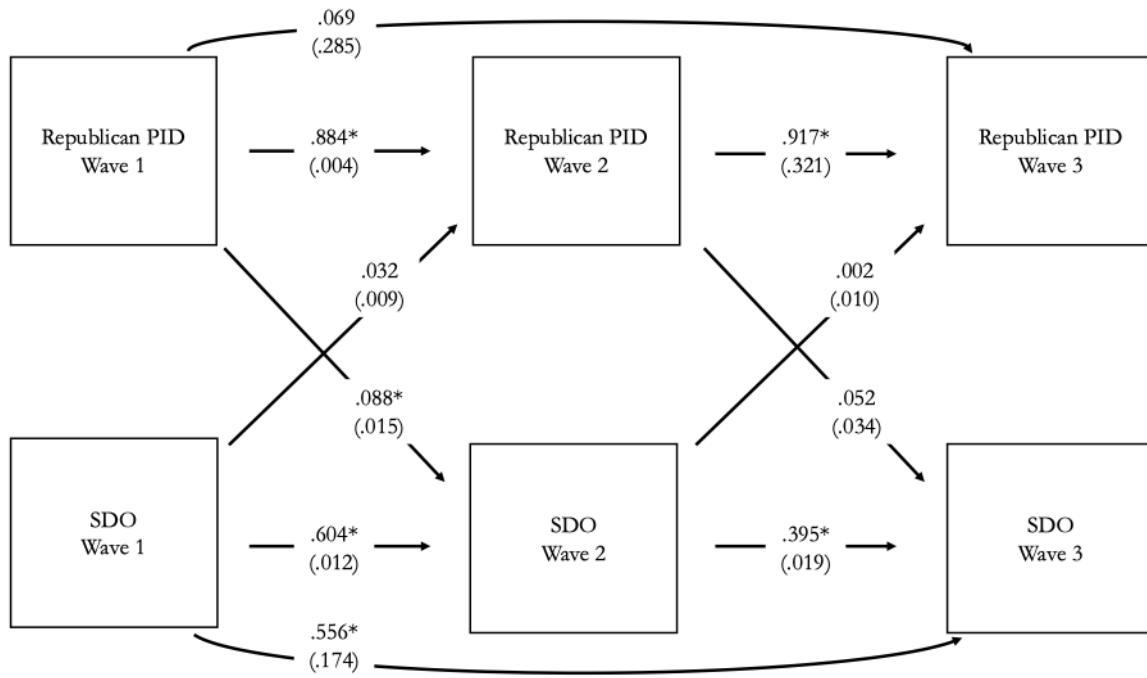
Moreover, empirical distributions of CLPM effect sizes indicate our confidence intervals contain small-to-moderate effects (Orth et al. 2024). Thus, we interpret these effects as substantively small, but practically meaningful for PoC.

In contrast, we find weak evidence of bi-directional effects, with authoritarianism (Wave 1) displaying substantively tiny effects on PID, in both periods, which are essentially zero and statistically unreliable despite our large sample size ($\text{authoritarianism}_{\text{wave 1}} \rightarrow \text{PID}_{\text{wave 2}}$ (.017, SE=.009, $p<.063$) ($\text{authoritarianism}_{\text{wave 2}} \rightarrow \text{PID}_{\text{wave 3}}$ (.009, SE=.007, $p<.227$)). Inclusion of covariates does not change our inferences here (OA.3).

Turning to SDO (Figure 2), we find another well-fitting model, but with more dispositive results (CFI/TLI = 1.000, .999; RMSEA [90%CI] = .011 [.000, .032]; SRMR = .003). Specifically, we find that a standard deviation shift in pro-Republican partisanship (Wave 1) meaningfully increases PoC's reports of social dominance orientation by close to one-tenth of a standard deviation (Wave 2) (.088, SE=.015, $p<.001$). This effect, however, drops in size and statistical significance (.051, SE=.034, $p<.131$) in the post-election period (Wave 3), with a weaker and unreliable coefficient nearly half the size of the one emerging in the pre-election period. If we constrain these two coefficients to equality, we observe a slight weakening of model fit based on a marginal increase in chi-square (1.065, $p<.151$, one-tail). Collectively, these patterns support (H1) and (H2). Indeed, SDO's estimated stabilities indicate that SDO levels in June 2025 align more closely with SDO levels in June 2024 than in December 2024, bolstering our inference here, while flagging possible fleeting effects.

In addition, we find weak evidence of a bi-directional influence between SDO and PID in either period. In the interval between W1 and W2, a standard deviation increase in social dominance orientation meagerly bumps up Republican partisanship (.033, SE=.009, $p < .001$), with this pattern further decreasing and becoming substantively and statistically indistinguishable from zero by Wave 3 (.009, SE=.008, $p < .259$). Inclusion of covariates does not alter our conclusions about (H1) and (H2) with respect to social dominance orientation (OA.3).

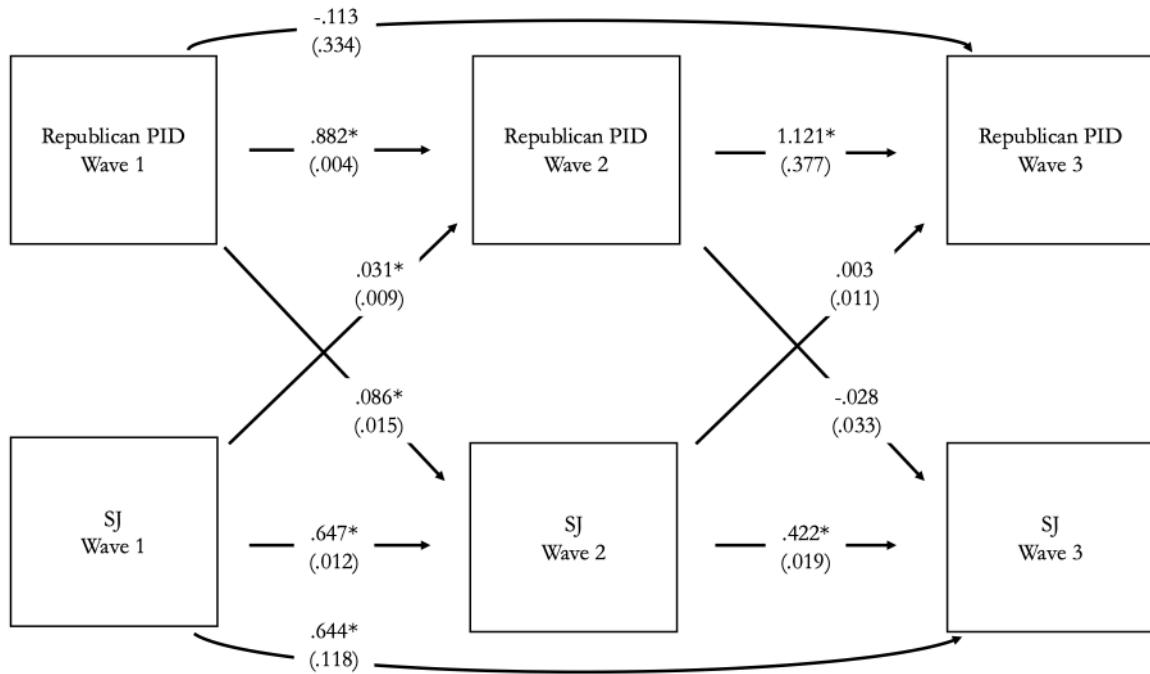
Figure 2. Temporal Relations between Republican PID and Social Dominance Orientation



Finally, when we analyze system justification, we yield another well-fitting model (CFI/TLI=1.000/.999; RMSEA [90%CI]=.019 [.000, .042]; SRMR=.003). Our estimates here provide further support for our claims. As predicted (H1), we find that a unit increase in pro-Republican partisanship meaningfully heightened reports of

system justification in the pre-election campaign period (W1 - W2) (.086, SE=.015, $p<.001$). Second, consistent with (H2), this effect becomes negative and unreliable by Wave 3 (-.030, SE=.033, $p<.358$). If we constrain these two coefficients to equality, we yield a highly significant increase in chi-square (10.397, $p<.001$, one-tailed), clearly suggesting this downward trend in coefficients is statistically and substantively meaningful. This is again supported by SJ's estimated stability coefficients, which show that June 2025 SJ aligns more closely with June 2024 SJ than December 2024, which indicates limited carryover from election-specific shifts. We also, again, find weak evidence of system justification constraining Republican partisanship levels among PoC, with system justification weakly affecting partisanship in the pre-election campaign period (W1 - W2)(.032, SE=.009, $p<.001$) and even more weakly and unreliably in the post-election period (W2 - W3) (.014, SE=.008, $p<.079$). Once more, inclusion of covariates does not alter our inferences here (OA.3).

Figure 3. Temporal Relations between Republican PID and System Justification



Conclusion

The 2024 election raised new and important questions about people of color and the support that some of them lent to the re-election of President Donald Trump, a GOP standard bearer with racially hostile attitudes and policy stances toward PoC. One of these uncertainties involves the degree to which PoC support for 2024's Republican presidential candidate reflected a case of false consciousness (Marx and Engels 1989; see also Alamillo 2019; Jost 2019; Pérez et al. 2024b), rather than expressive responding to items measuring various wellsprings of intolerance. Our battery of tests, with original longitudinal data on the three major populations of color in the U.S. (Pérez 2021), indicates that Republican PoC's expression of authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and system justification was exactly that – expressive (e.g., Graham and Huber 2022; Connors 2020; Bullock et al. 2015).

From this perspective, Republican PoC appear to have voiced agreement with these three postures toward intolerance because they were congenial to their party's campaign stances on culture war issues, such as race and racism, immigration, and gender politics (O'Brian 2024). Yet this partisan cheerleading appears to have weakened once the new Trump administration vigorously pursued its hostile agenda toward people of color and other socially disadvantaged groups. Taken as a whole, our findings reveal that there are clear limits to what Republican partisans of color are willing to support, even in a highly polarized era, which should encourage political scientists to be even more mindful of partisanship's nature among people of color.

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